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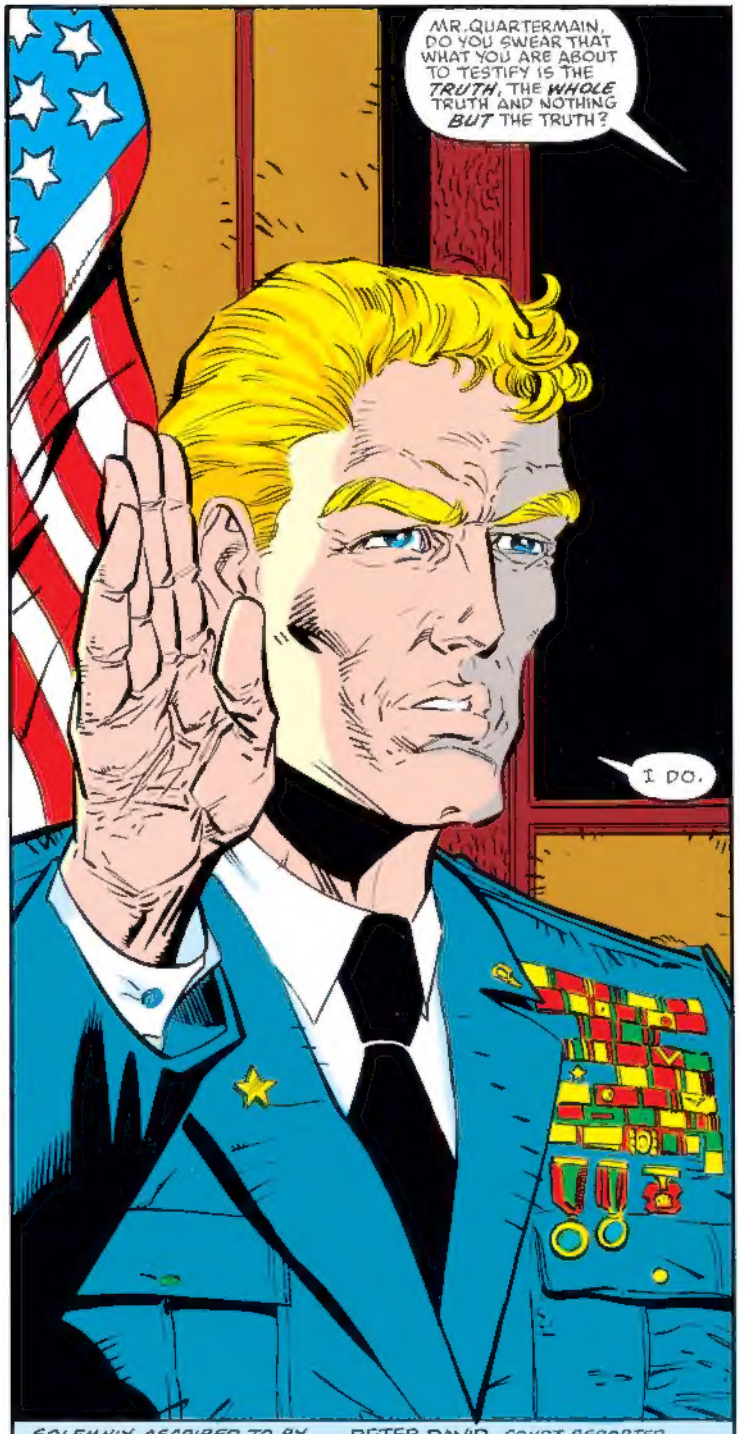
THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

ERIK LARSEN
McFARLANE

WHYS AND WHEREFORES

STAN LEE PRESENTS

WHYS AND WHEREFORES



SOLEMNLY ASCRIBED TO BY PETER DAVID, *COURT REPORTER*
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THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE EVENTS IN **NICK FURY VS. S.H.I.E.L.D.** *#1*

MR. QUARTERMAIN, THIS IS A SENATE HEARING, NOT A PAPAL AUDIENCE. YOU MAY SIT.

I PREFER TO STAND IF IT'S ALL RIGHT, MR. CHAIRMAN.

THEY'RE *YOUR* FEET, SIR.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE A STATEMENT TO READ?

YES, SIR.

I WISH TO STATE THAT *I*, ABOVE ALL OTHERS, REGRET THE FATE THAT BEFELL MIDDLETOWN A WEEK AGO.

IT IS A ***MAJOR*** TRAGEDY, THE SORT OF TRAGEDY I'D HOPED TO FORESTALL...

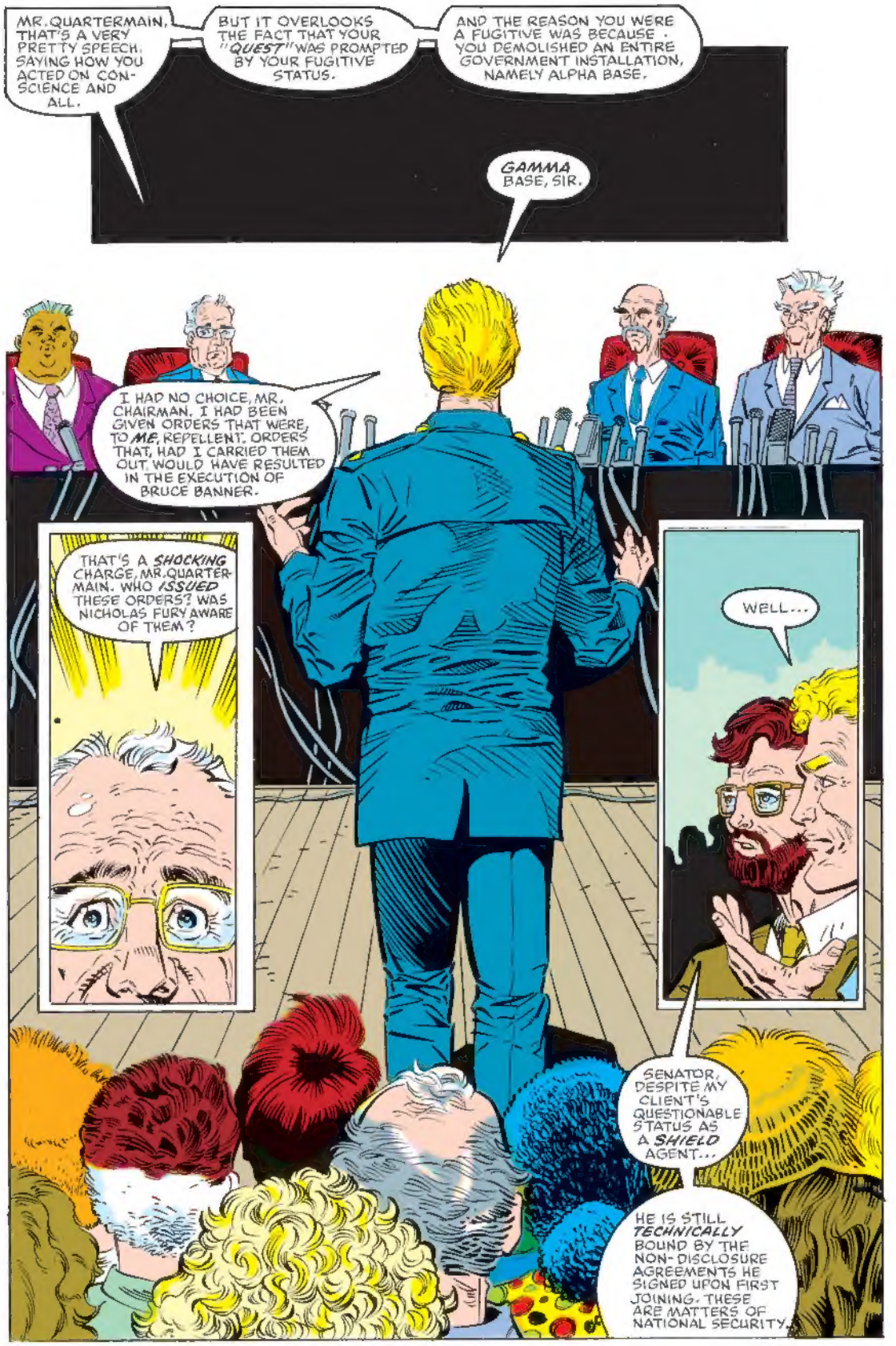
...WHEN I FIRST EMBARKED, SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, ON MY QUEST WITH RICK JONES AND THE LATE DOCTOR BANNER...

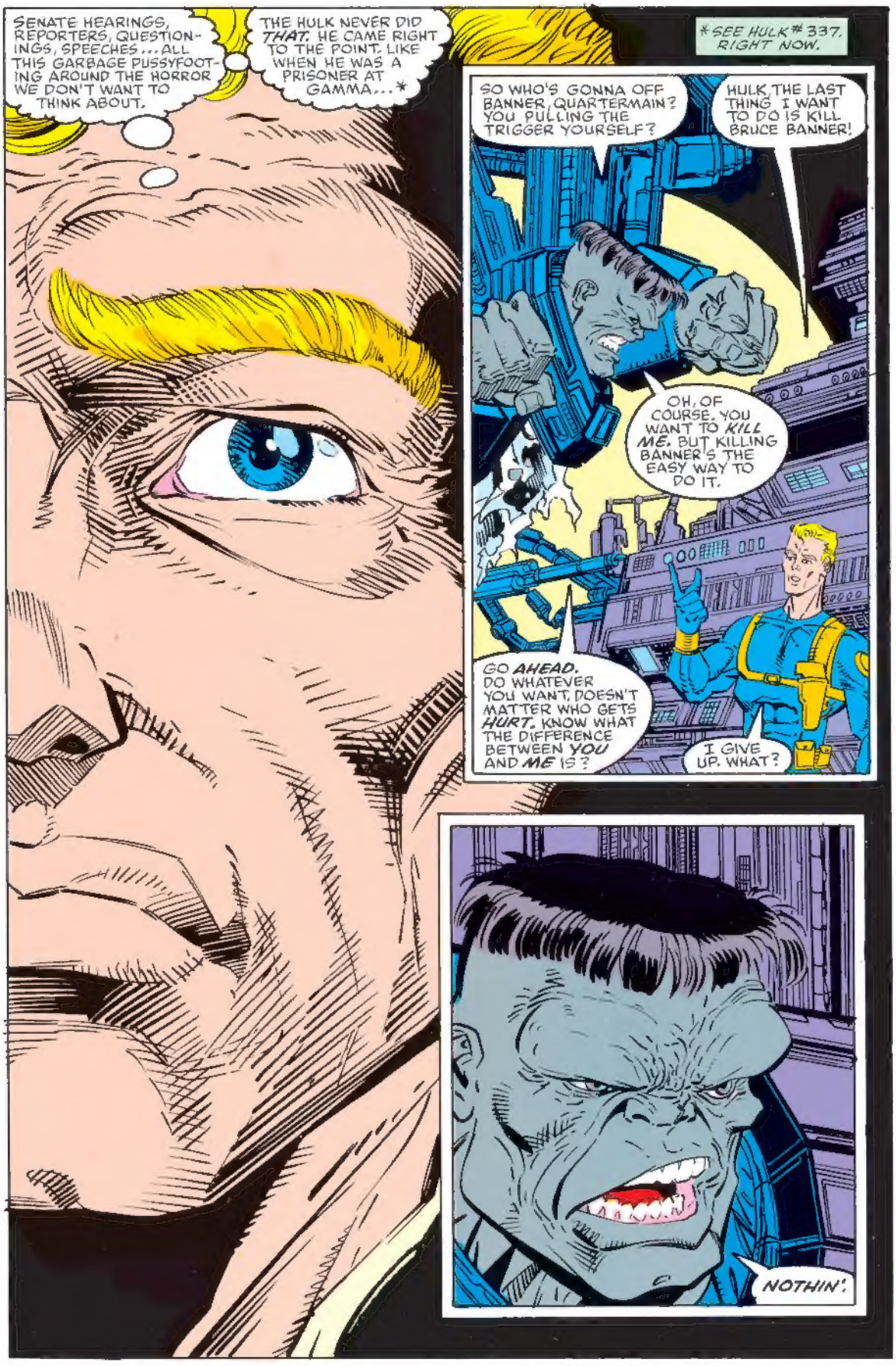
THEY PRE-EMPTED MY SOAPS FOR *THIS*?

GIVE 'EM WHAT-FOR, LITTLE BROTHER.

...A QUEST TO UNCOVER THE GAMMA BOMBS BEING MANU-FACTURED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

I COULD ***NOT***, IN GOOD CONSCIENCE, LET THE AMERICAN PUBLIC BE UN-AWARE OF THE MASS PRODUCTION OF THIS ***HIDEOUS WEAPON***. IT IS ...UNFORTUNATE...THAT IT TOOK THE MAJOR CALAMITY OF MIDDLE-TOWN'S DESTRUCTION TO DO IT.


MR. QUARTERMAIN, THAT'S A VERY PRETTY SPEECH, SAYING HOW YOU ACTED ON CONSCIENCE AND ALL.
BUT IT OVERLOOKS THE FACT THAT YOUR "*QUEST*" WAS PROMPTED BY YOUR FUGITIVE STATUS.
AND THE REASON YOU WERE A FUGITIVE WAS BECAUSE YOU DEMOLISHED AN ENTIRE GOVERNMENT INSTALLATION, NAMELY ALPHA BASE.
GAMMA BASE, SIR.
I HAD NO CHOICE, MR. CHAIRMAN. I HAD BEEN GIVEN ORDERS THAT WERE, TO *ME*, REPELLENT. ORDERS THAT, HAD I CARRIED THEM OUT, WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN THE EXECUTION OF BRUCE BANNER.
THAT'S A *SHOCKING* CHARGE, MR. QUARTERMAIN. WHO *ISSUED* THESE ORDERS? WAS NICHOLAS FURY AWARE OF THEM?
WELL...
SENATOR, DESPITE MY CLIENT'S QUESTIONABLE STATUS AS A *SHIELD* AGENT...
HE IS STILL *TECHNICALLY* BOUND BY THE NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS HE SIGNED UPON FIRST JOINING. THESE ARE MATTERS OF NATIONAL SECURITY.


SENATE HEARINGS, REPORTERS, QUESTIONINGS, SPEECHES... ALL THIS GARBAGE PUSSYFOOTING AROUND THE HORROR WE DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT.
THE HULK NEVER DID *THAT*. HE CAME RIGHT TO THE POINT. LIKE WHEN HE WAS A PRISONER AT GAMMA...*
*SEE HULK #337, RIGHT NOW.
SO WHO'S GONNA OFF BANNER, QUARTERMAIN? YOU PULLING THE TRIGGER YOURSELF?
HULK, THE LAST THING I WANT TO DO IS KILL BRUCE BANNER!
OH, OF COURSE. YOU WANT TO *KILL ME*. BUT KILLING BANNER'S THE EASY WAY TO DO IT.
GO *AHEAD*. DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, DOESN'T MATTER WHO GETS *HURT*. KNOW WHAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *YOU* AND *ME* IS?
I GIVE UP. WHAT?
AAAUUUGH!
NOTHIN'.

HE WAS *RIGHT*, OF COURSE. ABOUT THE PLAN TO KILL BRUCE. ABOUT... *EVERYTHING*. SO THAT'S WHEN I CALLED NICK, TO TELL HIM ABOUT THE ORDERS I'D GOTTEN FROM THE *SHIELD* COUNCIL.

BUT I WASN'T SURE WHAT TO *SAY*. MAYBE NICK ALREADY *KNEW* AND *APPROVED*...OR WORSE, MAYBE HE DIDN'T, AND I'D BE STICKING HIM IN THE MIDDLE.

SO I STOOD THERE AND CHATTED AIMLESSLY ABOUT HOW THINGS WERE GOING UNTIL...

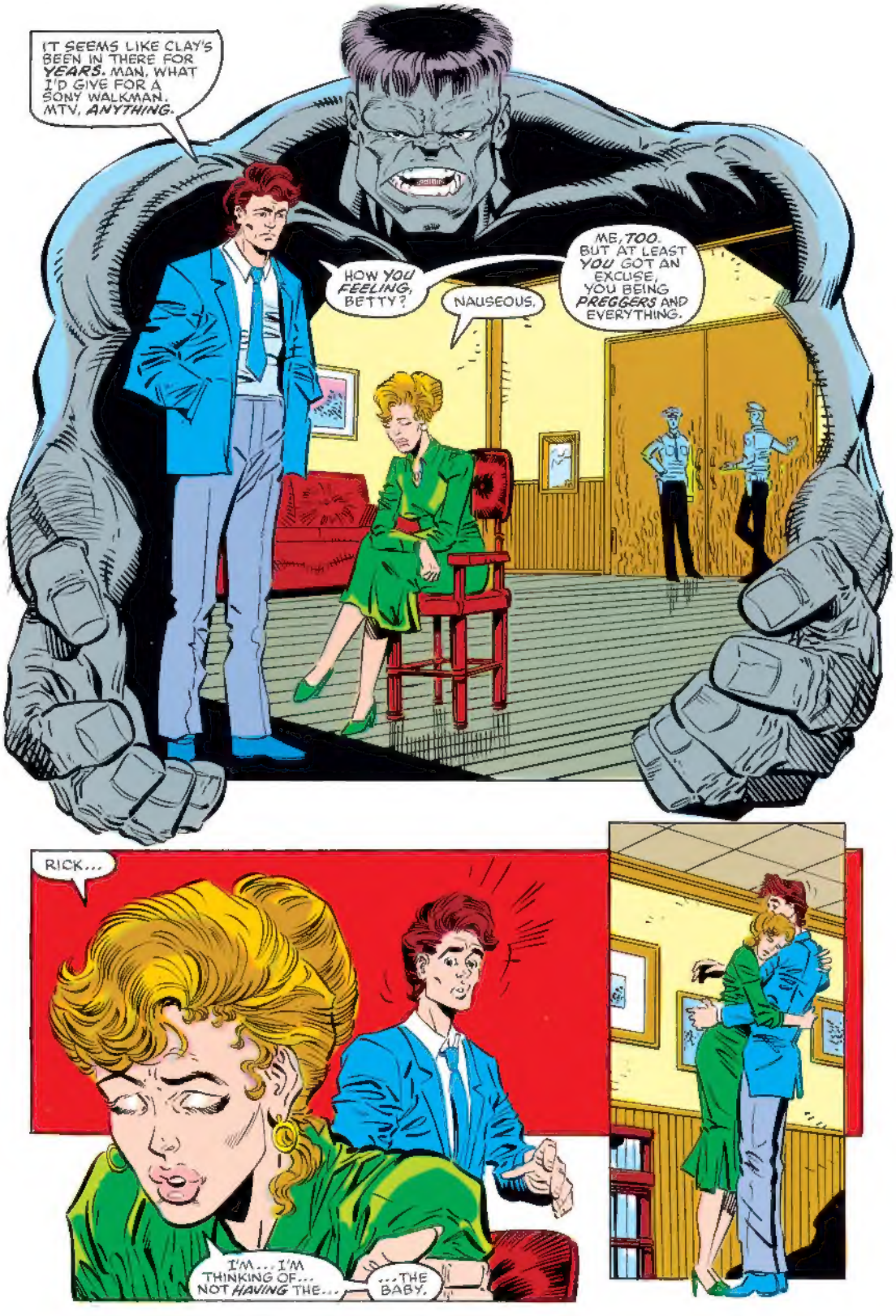
LOOK, CLAY, *OBVIOUSLY* THERE'S SOMETHIN' BUGGING YOU. BUT I DON'T HAVE THE *TIME* TO PUSSYFOOT AROUND RIGHT NOW.

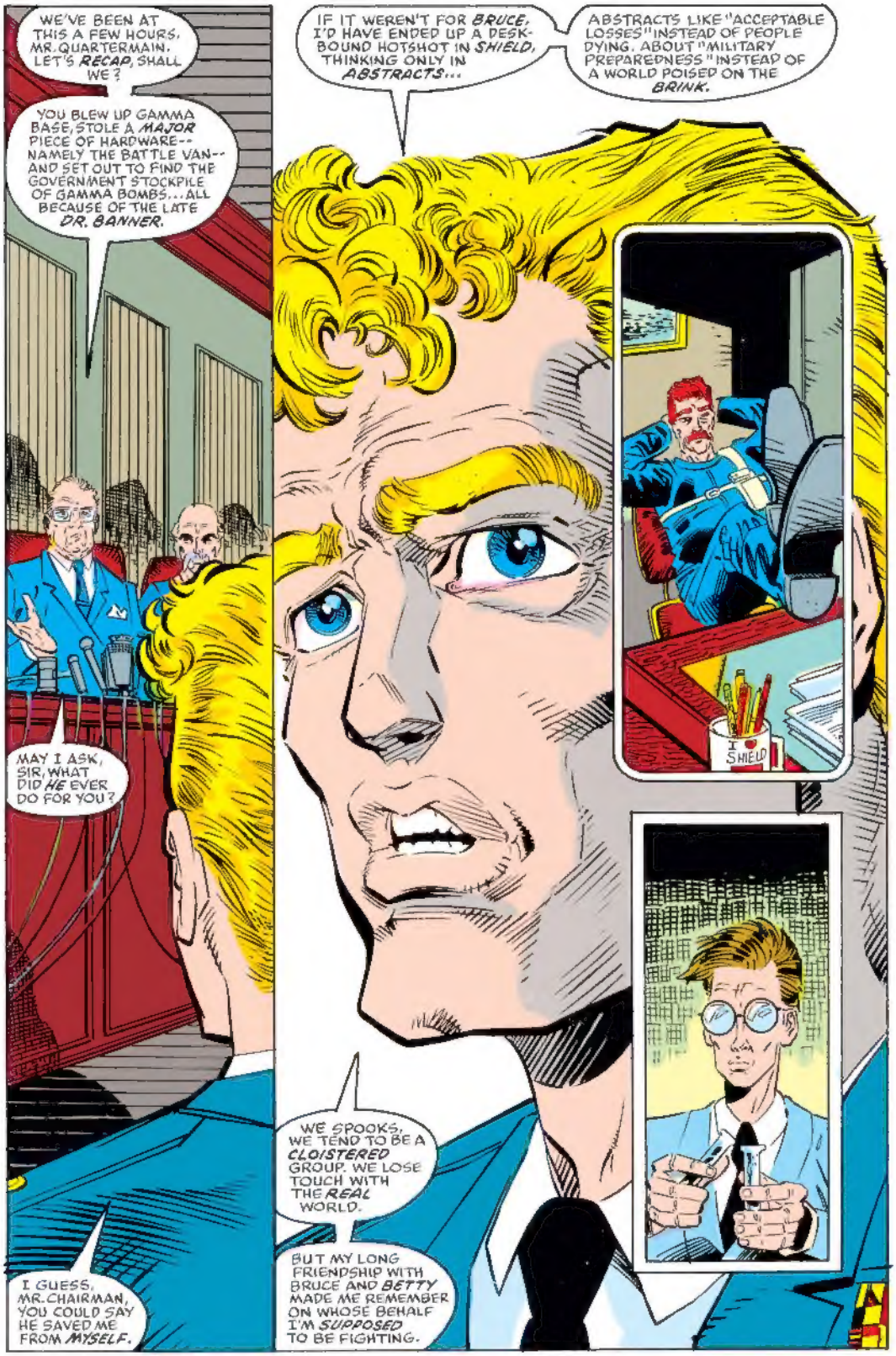
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN. YOU'RE IN CHARGE, AND YA DON'T NEED *ME* NURSEMAIDING YOU.

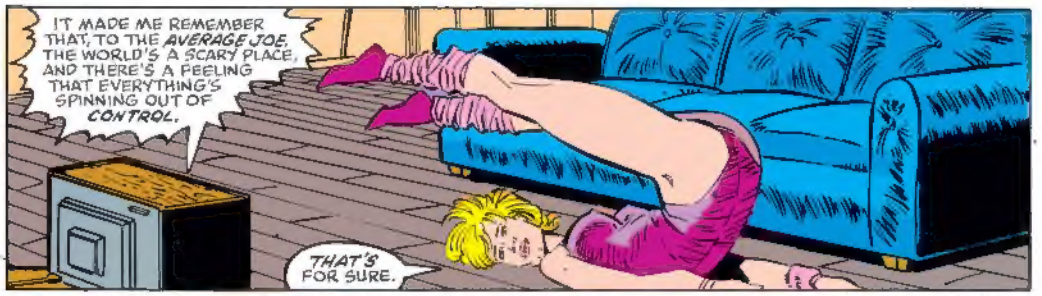
WHATEVER THE PROBLEM IS, SOLVE IT HOWEVER *YOU* SEE FIT. IT'LL DO YA *GOOD*. PUT *HAIR* ON YOUR CHEST.

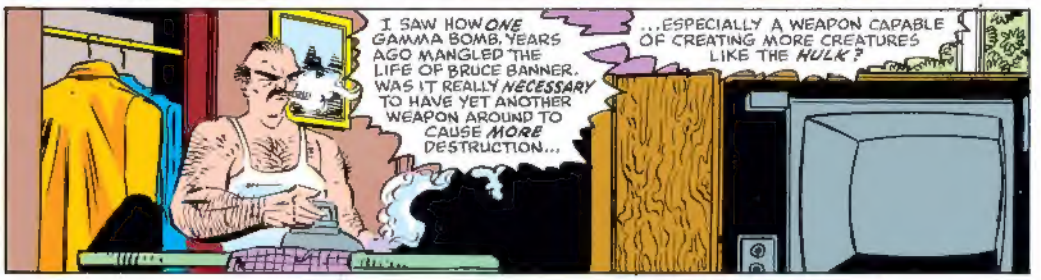
SENATOR, I'LL *ANSWER* THAT QUESTION.

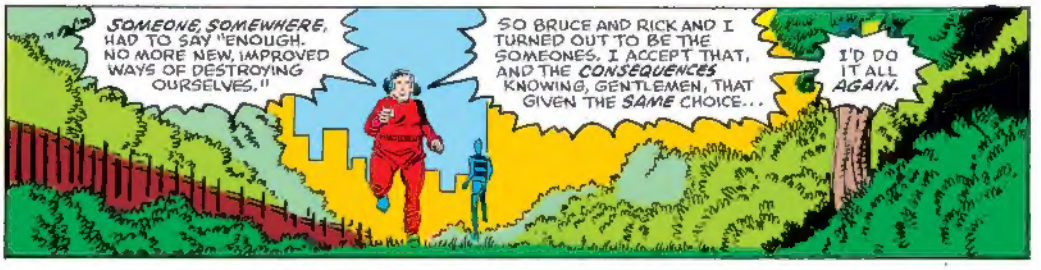
THE ANSWER IS *NO*. COLONEL FURY *DIDN'T* KNOW.


IT SEEMS LIKE CLAY'S BEEN IN THERE FOR *YEARS*. MAN, WHAT I'D GIVE FOR A SONY WALKMAN. MTV, *ANYTHING*.
HOW *YOU FEELING*, BETTY?
NAUSEOUS.
ME, *TOO*. BUT AT LEAST *YOU* GOT AN EXCUSE, YOU BEING *PREGGERS* AND EVERYTHING.
RICK...
I'M... I'M THINKING OF... NOT *HAVING* THE...
...THE BABY.


WE'VE BEEN AT THIS A FEW HOURS, MR. QUARTERMAIN. LET'S RECAP, SHALL WE?
YOU BLEW UP GAMMA BASE, STOLE A MAJOR PIECE OF HARDWARE-- NAMELY THE BATTLE VAN-- AND SET OUT TO FIND THE GOVERNMENT STOCKPILE OF GAMMA BOMBS... ALL BECAUSE OF THE LATE DR. BANNER.
MAY I ASK, SIR, WHAT DID HE EVER DO FOR YOU?
I GUESS, MR. CHAIRMAN, YOU COULD SAY HE SAVED ME FROM MYSELF.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR BRUCE, I'D HAVE ENDED UP A DESK-BOUND HOTSHOT IN SHIELD, THINKING ONLY IN ABSTRACTS...
ABSTRACTS LIKE "ACCEPTABLE LOSSES" INSTEAD OF PEOPLE DYING. ABOUT "MILITARY PREPAREDNESS" INSTEAD OF A WORLD POISED ON THE BRINK.
I ♥ SHIELD
WE SPOOKS, WE TEND TO BE A CLOISTERED GROUP. WE LOSE TOUCH WITH THE REAL WORLD.
BUT MY LONG FRIENDSHIP WITH BRUCE AND BETTY MADE ME REMEMBER ON WHOSE BEHALF I'M SUPPOSED TO BE FIGHTING.

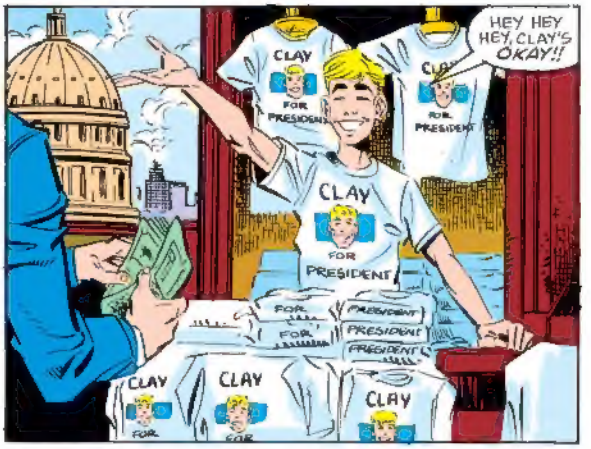

IT MADE ME REMEMBER THAT, TO THE AVERAGE JOE, THE WORLD'S A SCARY PLACE, AND THERE'S A FEELING THAT EVERYTHING'S SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL.
THAT'S FOR SURE.

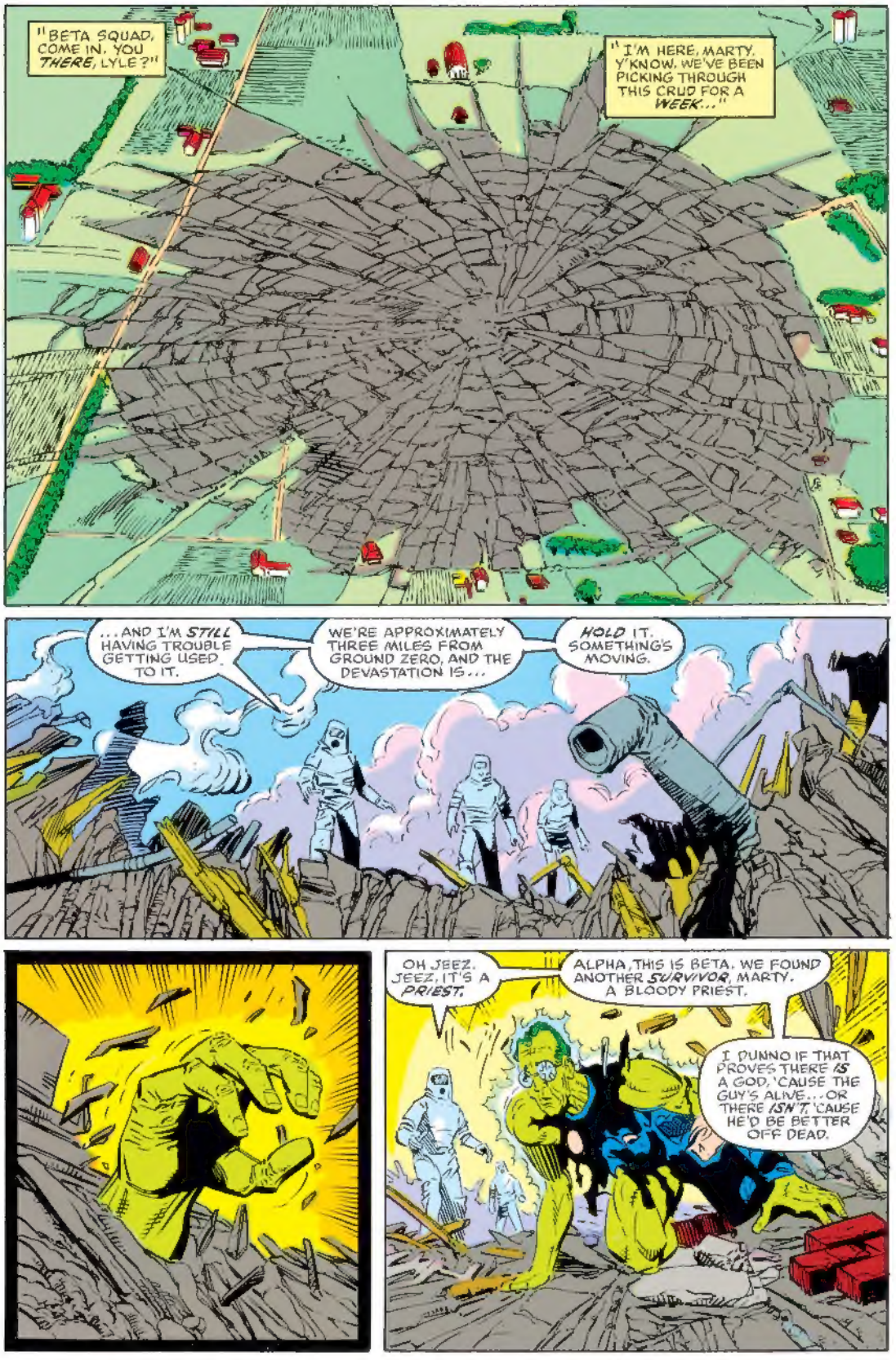

I SAW HOW ONE GAMMA BOMB, YEARS AGO MANGLED THE LIFE OF BRUCE BANNER. WAS IT REALLY NECESSARY TO HAVE YET ANOTHER WEAPON AROUND TO CAUSE MORE DESTRUCTION...
...ESPECIALLY A WEAPON CAPABLE OF CREATING MORE CREATURES LIKE THE HULK?

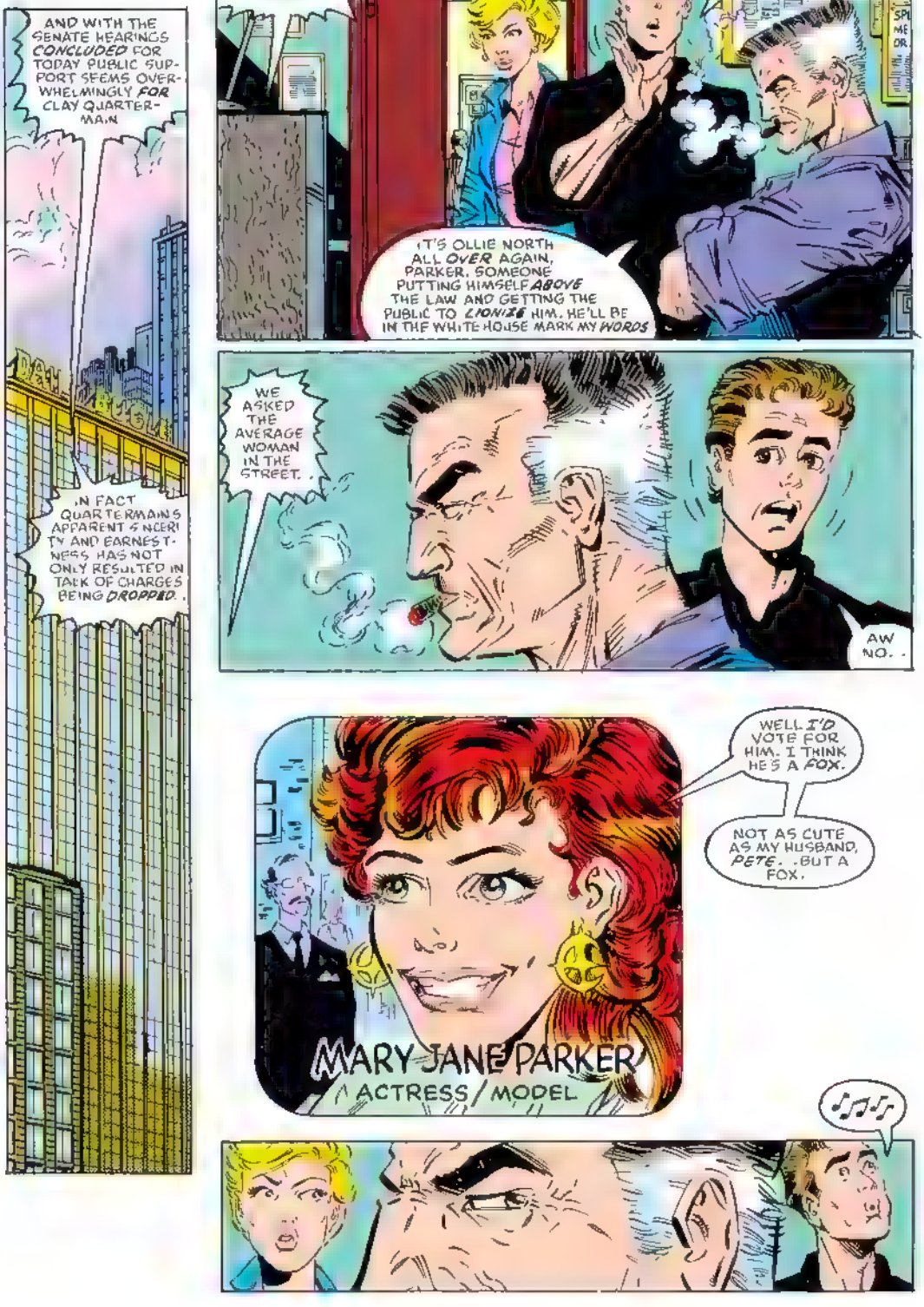

SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, HAD TO SAY "ENOUGH. NO MORE NEW, IMPROVED WAYS OF DESTROYING OURSELVES."
SO BRUCE AND RICK AND I TURNED OUT TO BE THE SOMEONES. I ACCEPT THAT, AND THE CONSEQUENCES KNOWING, GENTLEMEN, THAT GIVEN THE SAME CHOICE...
I'D DO IT ALL AGAIN.

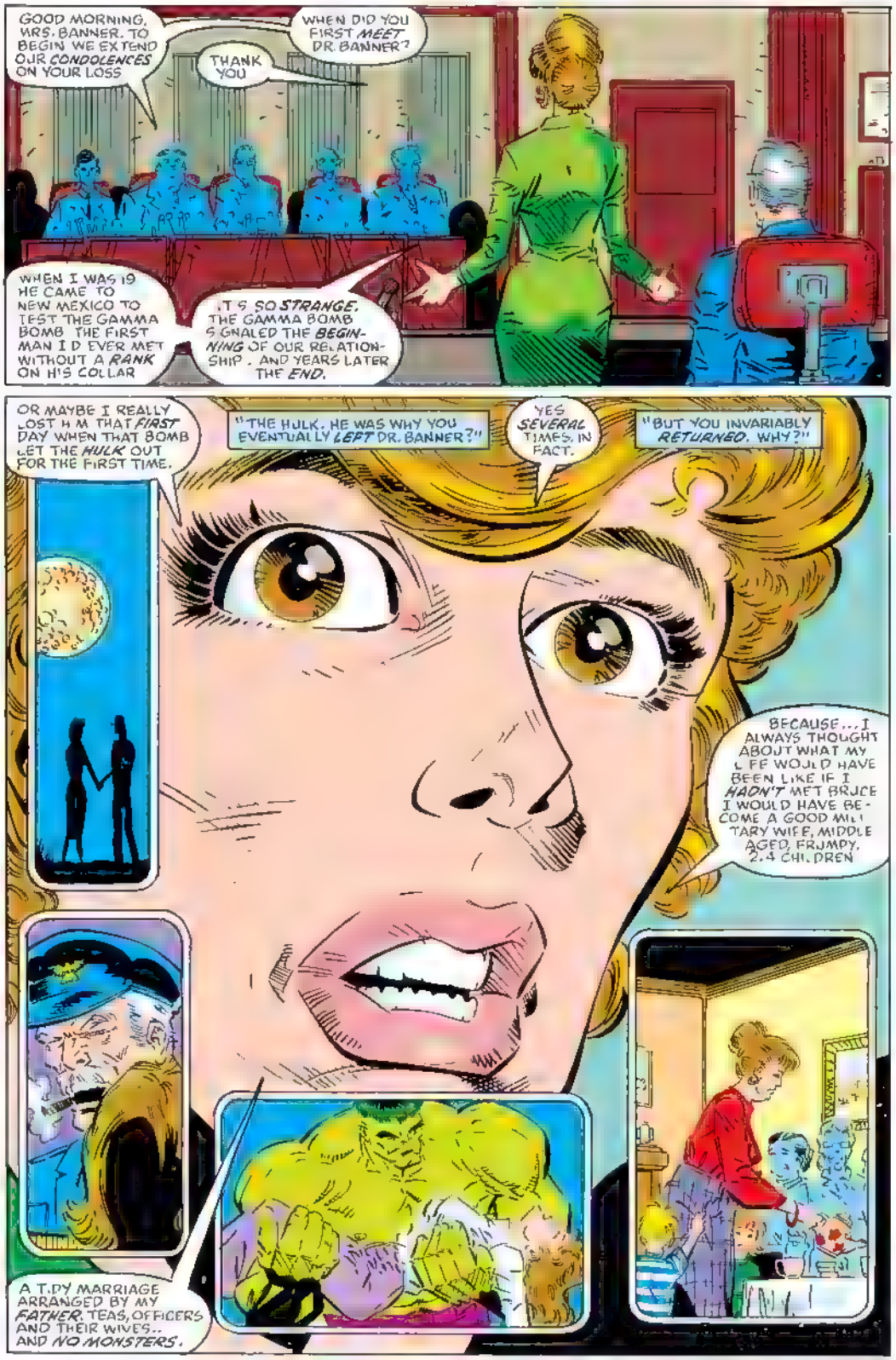
MR. QUARTERMAIN... YOU'RE NOT PLANNING ON ENTERING POLITICS, ARE YOU?
BECAUSE THAT SOUNDED SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE A CAMPAIGN SPEECH.

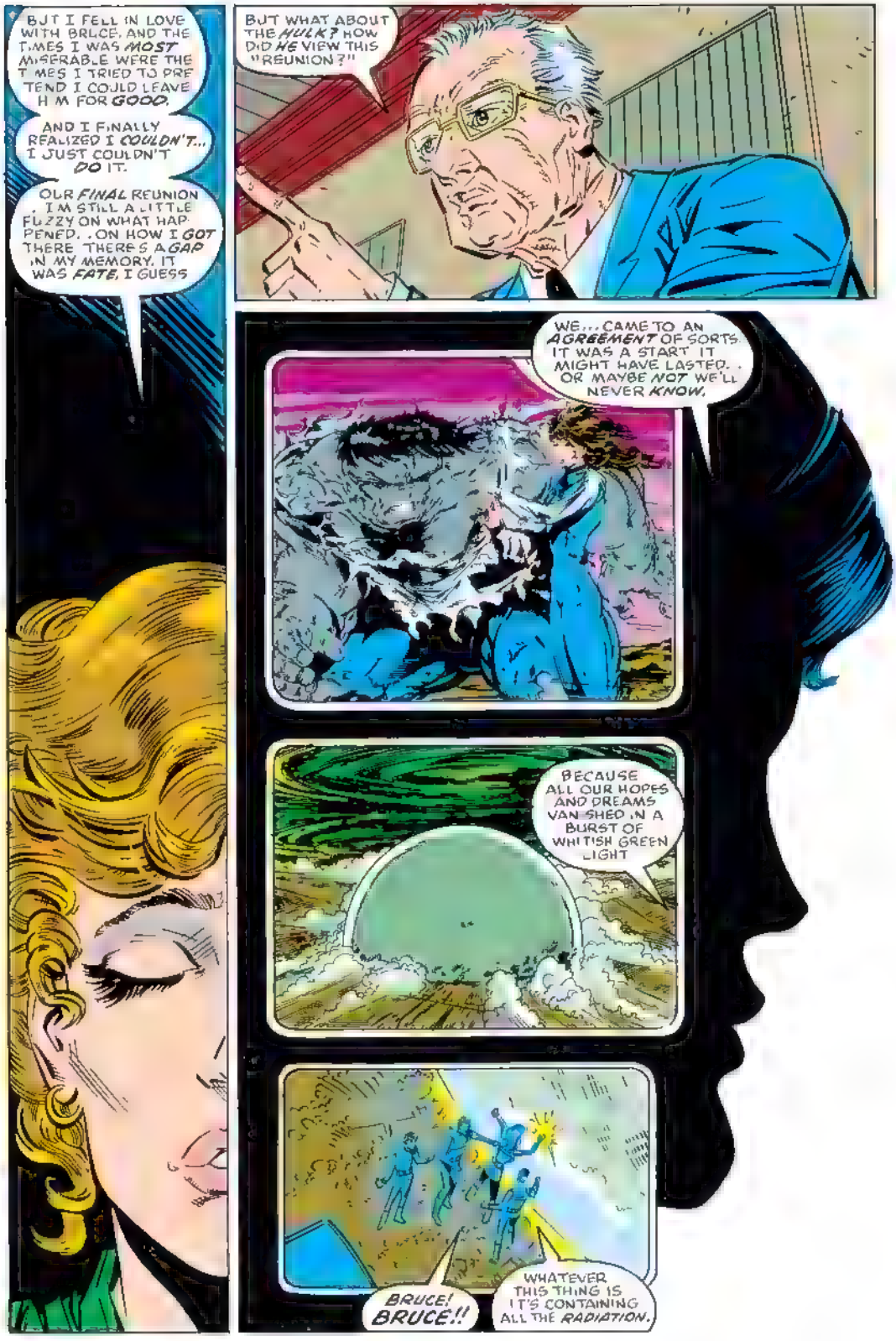
POLITICS?
MOI?

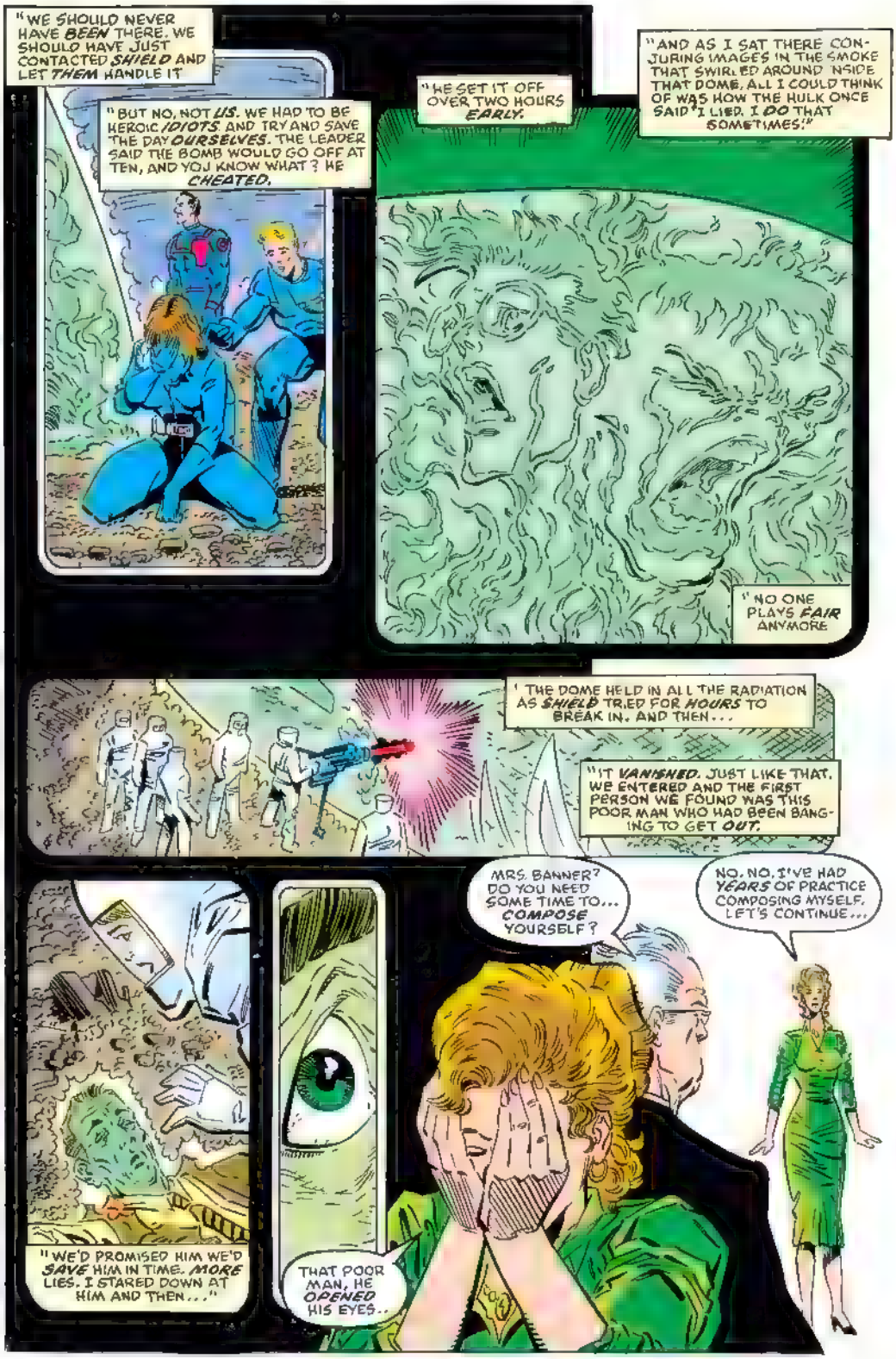

HEY HEY HEY, CLAY'S OKAY!!
CLAY
FOR PRESIDENT

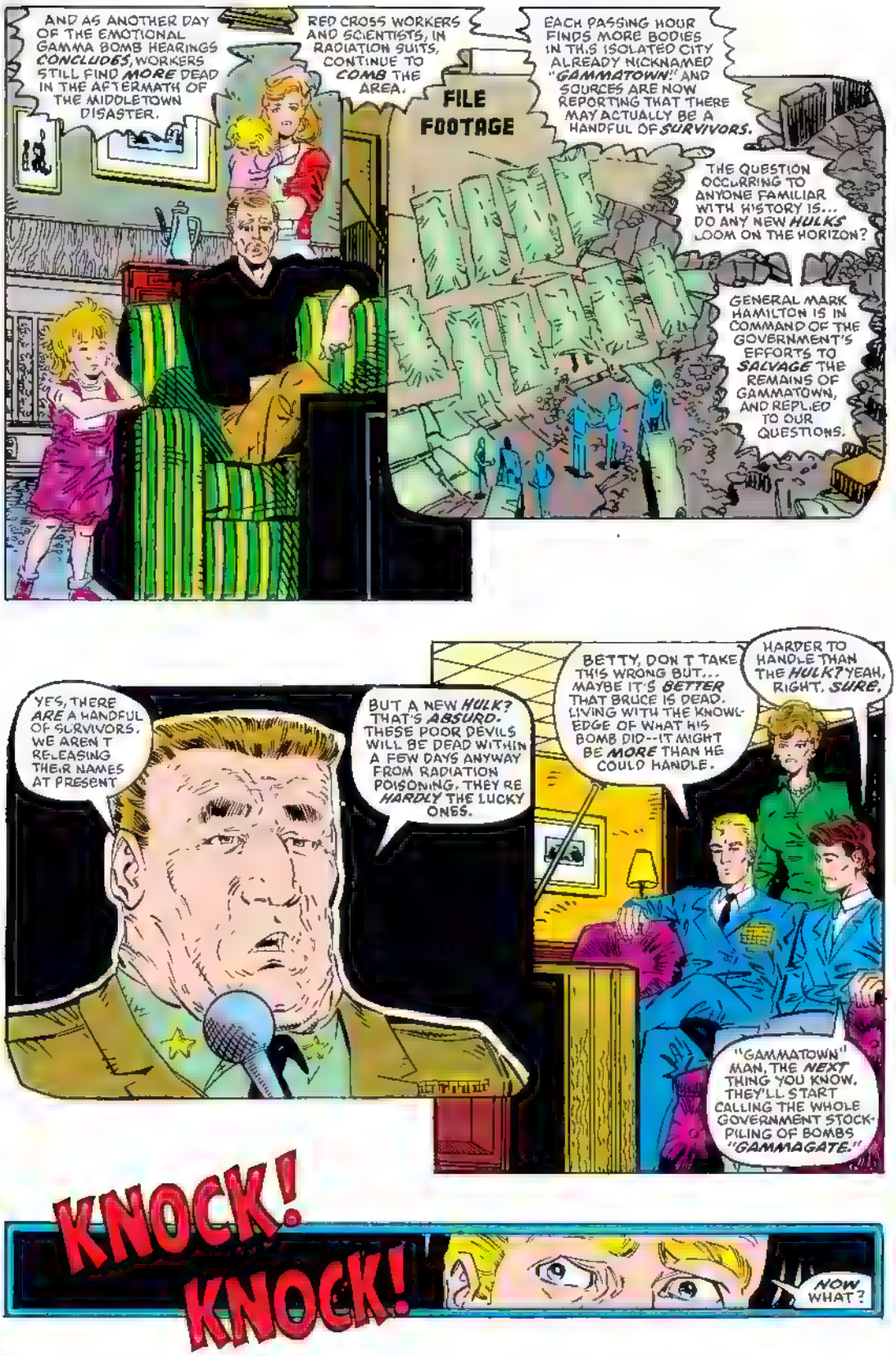

"BETA SQUAD, COME IN. YOU THERE, LYLE?"
"I'M HERE, MARTY. Y'KNOW, WE'VE BEEN PICKING THROUGH THIS CRUD FOR A WEEK..."
...AND I'M STILL HAVING TROUBLE GETTING USED TO IT.
WE'RE APPROXIMATELY THREE MILES FROM GROUND ZERO, AND THE DEVASTATION IS...
HOLD IT. SOMETHING'S MOVING.
OH JEEZ. JEEZ, IT'S A PRIEST.
ALPHA, THIS IS BETA. WE FOUND ANOTHER SURVIVOR, MARTY. A BLOODY PRIEST.
I DUNNO IF THAT PROVES THERE IS A GOD, 'CAUSE THE GUY'S ALIVE...OR THERE ISN'T, 'CAUSE HE'D BE BETTER OFF DEAD.

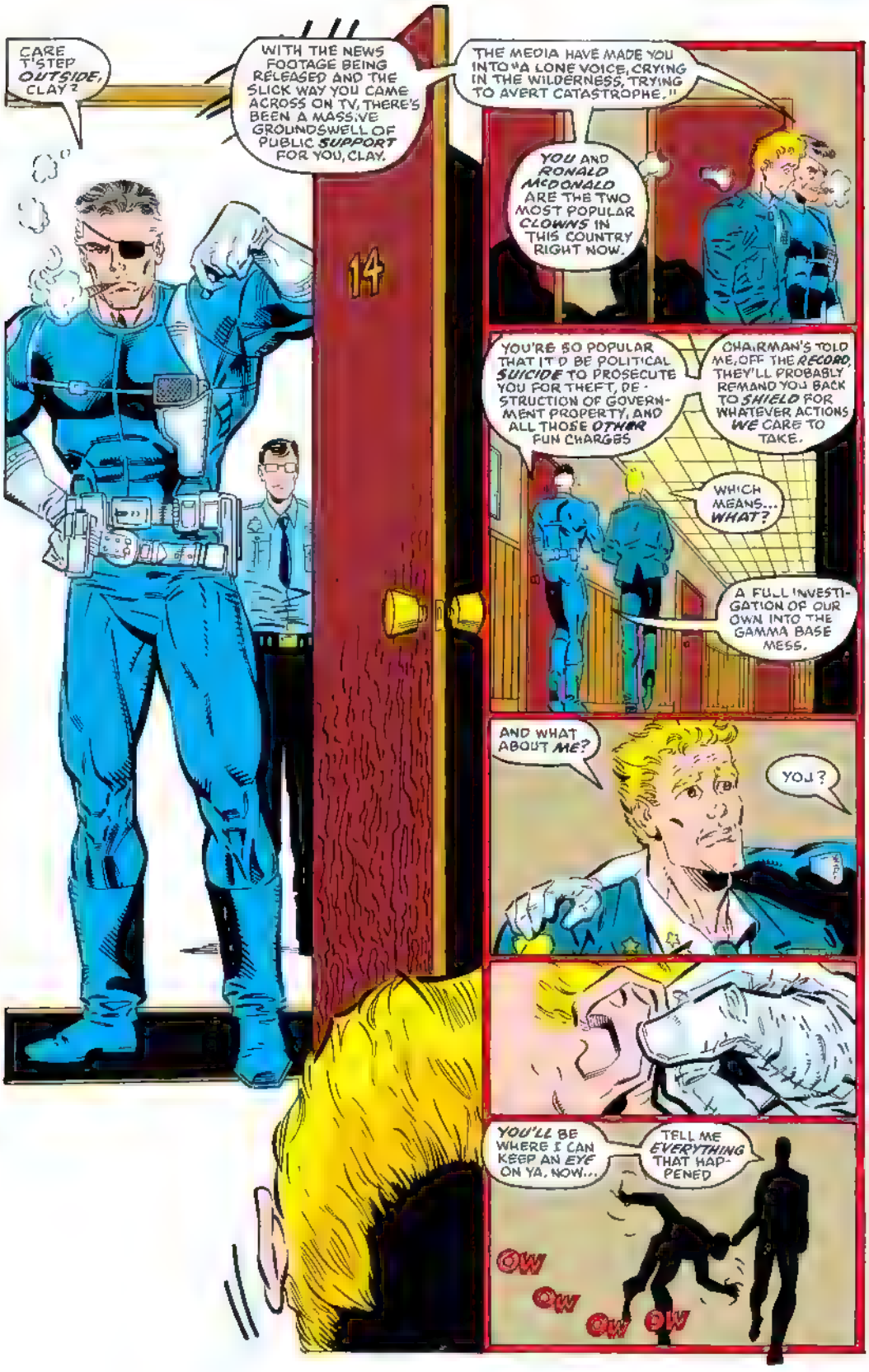

AND WITH THE SENATE HEARINGS CONCLUDED FOR TODAY PUBLIC SUPPORT SEEMS OVERWHELMINGLY FOR CLAY QUARTERMAIN
IN FACT QUARTERMAIN'S APPARENT SINCERITY AND EARNESTNESS HAS NOT ONLY RESULTED IN TALK OF CHARGES BEING DROPPED.
.. BUT ALSO IN A GRASS ROOTS "CLAY QUARTERMAIN FOR PRESIDENT" MOVEMENT
AW, C'MON, JONAH, NORTH HAS VANISHED, AND QUARTERMAIN WILL TOO I MEAN, WHO'D REALLY VOTE FOR THE GUY?
IT'S OLLIE NORTH ALL OVER AGAIN, PARKER. SOMEONE PUTTING HIMSELF ABOVE THE LAW AND GETTING THE PUBLIC TO LIONIZE HIM. HE'LL BE IN THE WHITE HOUSE MARK MY WORDS
WE ASKED THE AVERAGE WOMAN IN THE STREET.
AW NO..
WELL I'D VOTE FOR HIM. I THINK HE'S A FOX.
NOT AS CUTE AS MY HUSBAND, PETE. .BUT A FOX.
MARY JANE PARKER
ACTRESS / MODEL
♫♫♫

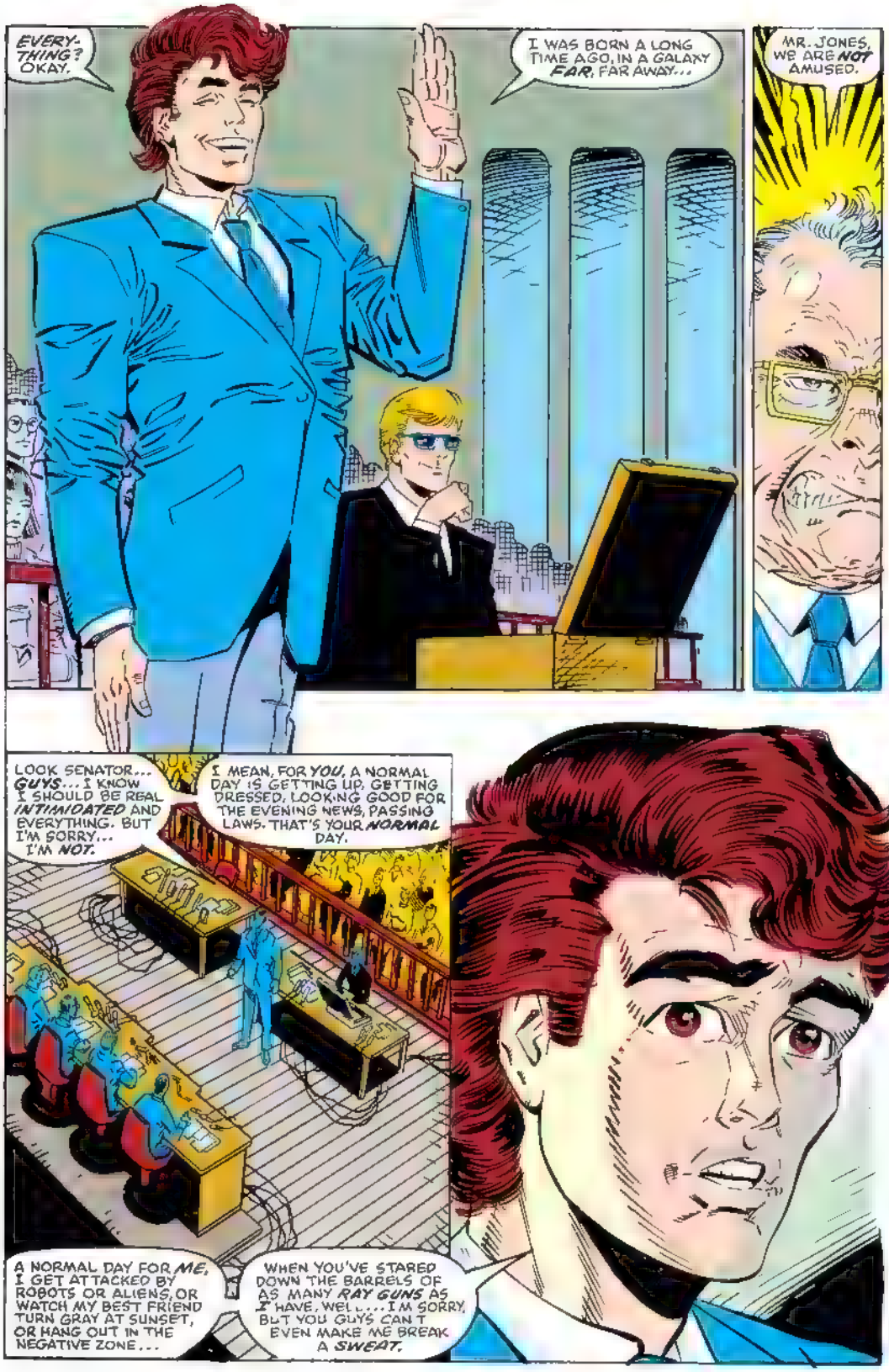

GOOD MORNING, MRS. BANNER. TO BEGIN WE EXTEND OUR CONDOLENCES ON YOUR LOSS
THANK YOU
WHEN DID YOU FIRST MEET DR. BANNER?
WHEN I WAS 19 HE CAME TO NEW MEXICO TO TEST THE GAMMA BOMB. THE FIRST MAN I'D EVER MET WITHOUT A RANK ON HIS COLLAR
IT'S SO STRANGE. THE GAMMA BOMB SIGNALED THE BEGINNING OF OUR RELATIONSHIP. AND YEARS LATER THE END.
OR MAYBE I REALLY LOST HIM THAT FIRST DAY WHEN THAT BOMB LET THE HULK OUT FOR THE FIRST TIME.
"THE HULK. HE WAS WHY YOU EVENTUALLY LEFT DR. BANNER?"
YES SEVERAL TIMES, IN FACT.
"BUT YOU INVARIABLY RETURNED. WHY?"
BECAUSE... I ALWAYS THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT MY LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE IF I HADN'T MET BRUCE. I WOULD HAVE BECOME A GOOD MILITARY WIFE, MIDDLE AGED, FRUMPY, 2.4 CHILDREN
A TIDY MARRIAGE ARRANGED BY MY FATHER. TEAS, OFFICERS AND THEIR WIVES.. AND NO MONSTERS.


BUT I FELL IN LOVE WITH BRUCE, AND THE TIMES I WAS MOST MISERABLE WERE THE TIMES I TRIED TO PRETEND I COULD LEAVE HIM FOR GOOD.
AND I FINALLY REALIZED I COULDN'T... I JUST COULDN'T DO IT.
OUR FINAL REUNION. I'M STILL A LITTLE FUZZY ON WHAT HAPPENED. . ON HOW I GOT THERE. THERE'S A GAP IN MY MEMORY. IT WAS FATE, I GUESS
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE HULK? HOW DID HE VIEW THIS "REUNION?"
WE... CAME TO AN AGREEMENT OF SORTS. IT WAS A START. IT MIGHT HAVE LASTED. . OR MAYBE NOT. WE'LL NEVER KNOW.
BECAUSE ALL OUR HOPES AND DREAMS VANISHED IN A BURST OF WHITISH GREEN LIGHT
BRUCE! BRUCE!!
WHATEVER THIS THING IS, IT'S CONTAINING ALL THE RADIATION.


"WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE *BEEN* THERE. WE SHOULD HAVE JUST CONTACTED *SHIELD* AND LET *THEM* HANDLE IT
"BUT NO. NOT *US*. WE HAD TO BE HEROIC *IDIOTS* AND TRY AND SAVE THE DAY *OURSELVES*. THE LEADER SAID THE BOMB WOULD GO OFF AT TEN, AND YOU KNOW WHAT? HE *CHEATED*.
"HE SET IT OFF OVER TWO HOURS *EARLY*.
"AND AS I SAT THERE CONJURING IMAGES IN THE SMOKE THAT SWIRLED AROUND INSIDE THAT DOME, ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS HOW THE HULK ONCE SAID "I LIED. I *DO* THAT SOMETIMES!"
"NO ONE PLAYS *FAIR* ANYMORE
"THE DOME HELD IN ALL THE RADIATION AS *SHIELD* TRIED FOR *HOURS* TO BREAK IN. AND THEN...
"IT *VANISHED*. JUST LIKE THAT. WE ENTERED AND THE FIRST PERSON WE FOUND WAS THIS POOR MAN WHO HAD BEEN BANGING TO GET *OUT*.
"WE'D PROMISED HIM WE'D *SAVE* HIM IN TIME. *MORE* LIES. I STARED DOWN AT HIM AND THEN..."
THAT POOR MAN, HE *OPENED* HIS EYES..
MRS. BANNER? DO YOU NEED SOME TIME TO... *COMPOSE* YOURSELF?
NO, NO, I'VE HAD *YEARS* OF PRACTICE COMPOSING MYSELF. LET'S CONTINUE...


AND AS ANOTHER DAY OF THE EMOTIONAL GAMMA BOMB HEARINGS CONCLUDES, WORKERS STILL FIND MORE DEAD IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE MIDDLETOWN DISASTER.
RED CROSS WORKERS AND SCIENTISTS, IN RADIATION SUITS, CONTINUE TO COMB THE AREA.
FILE FOOTAGE
EACH PASSING HOUR FINDS MORE BODIES IN THIS ISOLATED CITY ALREADY NICKNAMED "GAMMATOWN!" AND SOURCES ARE NOW REPORTING THAT THERE MAY ACTUALLY BE A HANDFUL OF SURVIVORS.
THE QUESTION OCCURRING TO ANYONE FAMILIAR WITH HISTORY IS... DO ANY NEW HULKS LOOM ON THE HORIZON?
GENERAL MARK HAMILTON IS IN COMMAND OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO SALVAGE THE REMAINS OF GAMMATOWN, AND REPLIED TO OUR QUESTIONS.
YES, THERE ARE A HANDFUL OF SURVIVORS. WE AREN'T RELEASING THEIR NAMES AT PRESENT
BUT A NEW HULK? THAT'S ABSURD. THESE POOR DEVILS WILL BE DEAD WITHIN A FEW DAYS ANYWAY FROM RADIATION POISONING. THEY'RE HARDLY THE LUCKY ONES.
BETTY, DON'T TAKE THIS WRONG BUT... MAYBE IT'S BETTER THAT BRUCE IS DEAD. LIVING WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT HIS BOMB DID--IT MIGHT BE MORE THAN HE COULD HANDLE.
HARDER TO HANDLE THAN THE HULK? YEAH, RIGHT. SURE.
"GAMMATOWN" MAN, THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW, THEY'LL START CALLING THE WHOLE GOVERNMENT STOCKPILING OF BOMBS "GAMMAGATE."
KNOCK! KNOCK!
NOW WHAT?


CARE T'STEP OUTSIDE, CLAY?
WITH THE NEWS FOOTAGE BEING RELEASED AND THE SLICK WAY YOU CAME ACROSS ON TV, THERE'S BEEN A MASSIVE GROUNDSWELL OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR YOU, CLAY.
14
THE MEDIA HAVE MADE YOU INTO "A LONE VOICE, CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, TRYING TO AVERT CATASTROPHE."
YOU AND RONALD MCDONALD ARE THE TWO MOST POPULAR CLOWNS IN THIS COUNTRY RIGHT NOW.
YOU'RE SO POPULAR THAT IT'D BE POLITICAL SUICIDE TO PROSECUTE YOU FOR THEFT, DESTRUCTION OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY, AND ALL THOSE OTHER FUN CHARGES
CHAIRMAN'S TOLD ME, OFF THE RECORD, THEY'LL PROBABLY REMAND YOU BACK TO SHIELD FOR WHATEVER ACTIONS WE CARE TO TAKE.
WHICH MEANS... WHAT?
A FULL INVESTIGATION OF OUR OWN INTO THE GAMMA BASE MESS.
AND WHAT ABOUT ME?
YOU?
YOU'LL BE WHERE I CAN KEEP AN EYE ON YA, NOW...
TELL ME EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED
OW
OW
OW
OW


EVERY-THING? OKAY.
I WAS BORN A LONG TIME AGO, IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...
MR. JONES, WE ARE NOT AMUSED.
LOOK SENATOR... GUYS... I KNOW I SHOULD BE REAL INTIMIDATED AND EVERYTHING. BUT I'M SORRY... I'M NOT.
I MEAN, FOR YOU, A NORMAL DAY IS GETTING UP, GETTING DRESSED, LOOKING GOOD FOR THE EVENING NEWS, PASSING LAWS. THAT'S YOUR NORMAL DAY.
A NORMAL DAY FOR ME, I GET ATTACKED BY ROBOTS OR ALIENS, OR WATCH MY BEST FRIEND TURN GRAY AT SUNSET, OR HANG OUT IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE...
WHEN YOU'VE STARED DOWN THE BARRELS OF AS MANY RAY GUNS AS I HAVE, WELL... I'M SORRY, BUT YOU GUYS CAN'T EVEN MAKE ME BREAK A SWEAT.

"I DIDN'T *KNOW* I WAS GOING TO WIND UP LIKE THIS. YEARS AGO, ALL I *CARED* ABOUT WAS I WAS GOING TO WIN A BET WITH MY FRIENDS BY DRIVING OUT ON THIS *TESTING* RANGE. I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE ABOUT TO TEST THE FIRST *GAMMA BOMB.*

"DIDN'T KNOW THAT BRUCE BANNER, THE GUY WHO SAVED ME BY PUSHING ME TO *SAFETY*...

"...WAS GOING TO SPEND THE *REST* OF HIS LIFE PAYING FOR BAILING OUT *MY* SCRAWNY HIDE."

"MR JONES, YOU STUCK WITH THE HULK FOR *MANY* YEARS, DIDN'T YOU?"

"YEAH."

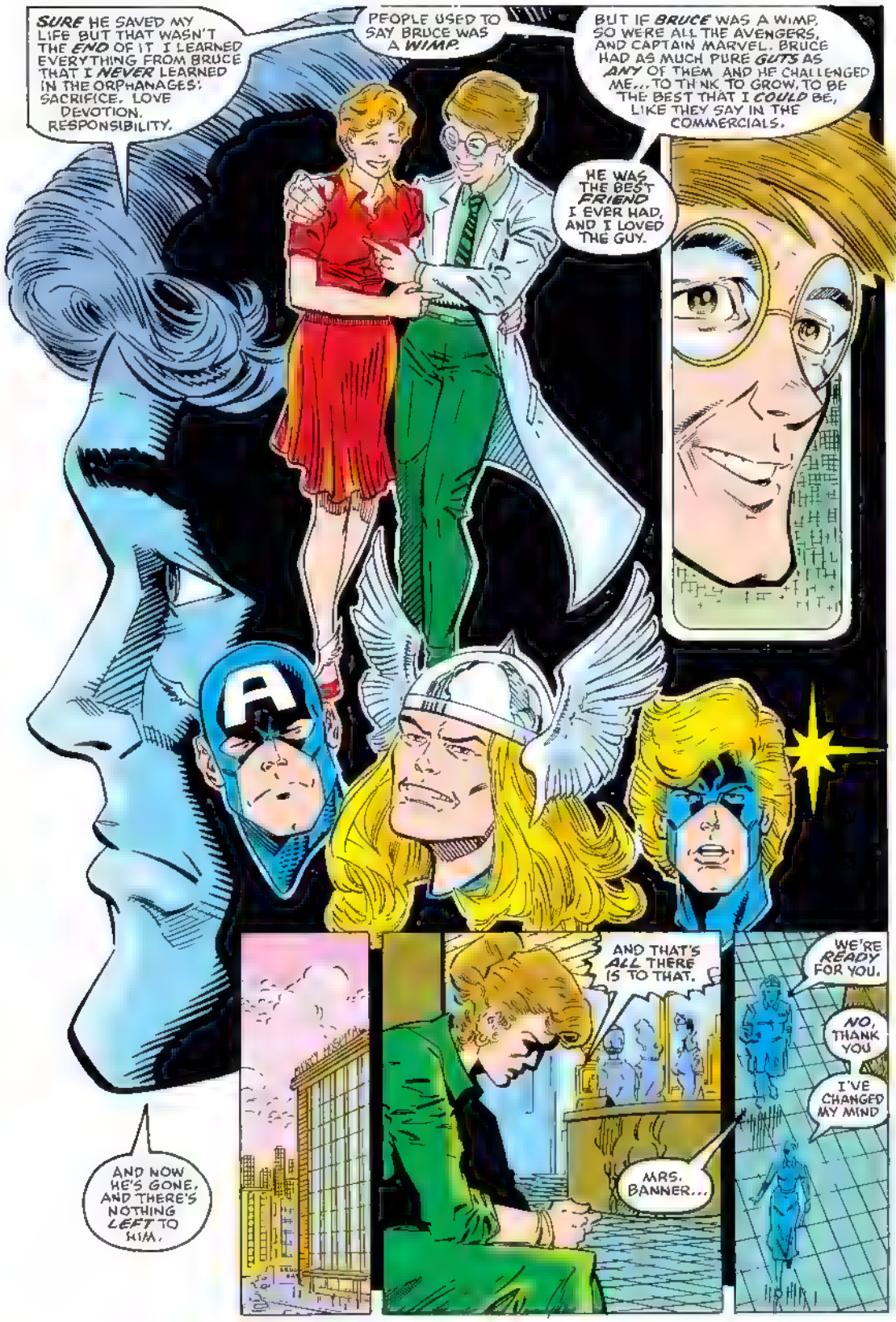
"*WHY?* WE UNDERSTAND *GRATITUDE* IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS BUT CONSIDER ING SUBSEQUENT EVENTS !

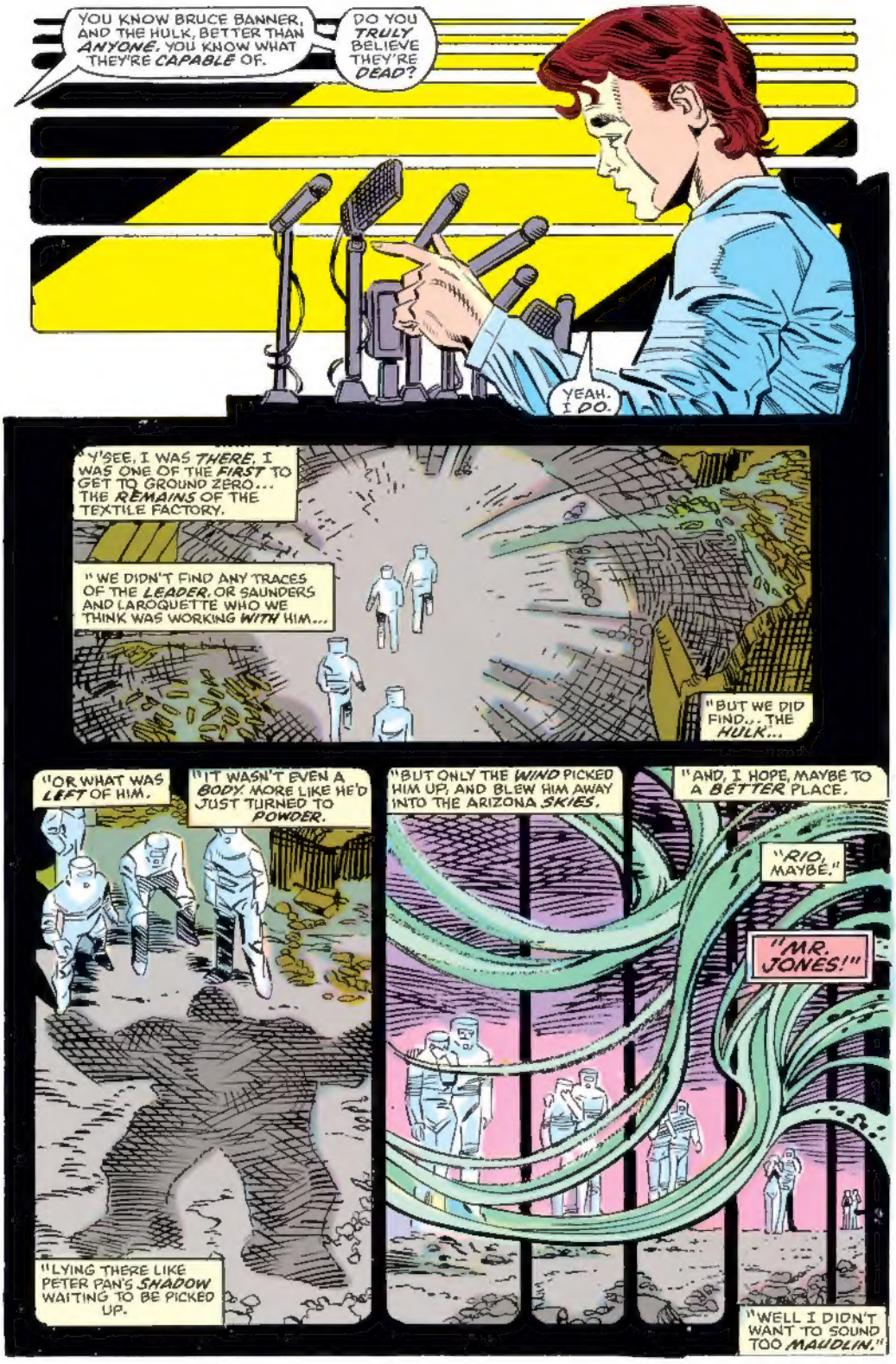
Y'KNOW, YOJ ASKED THE *OTHERS* WHERE THEY'D BE WITHOUT BRUCE BANNER WANT TO KNOW WHERE *I'D* BE?

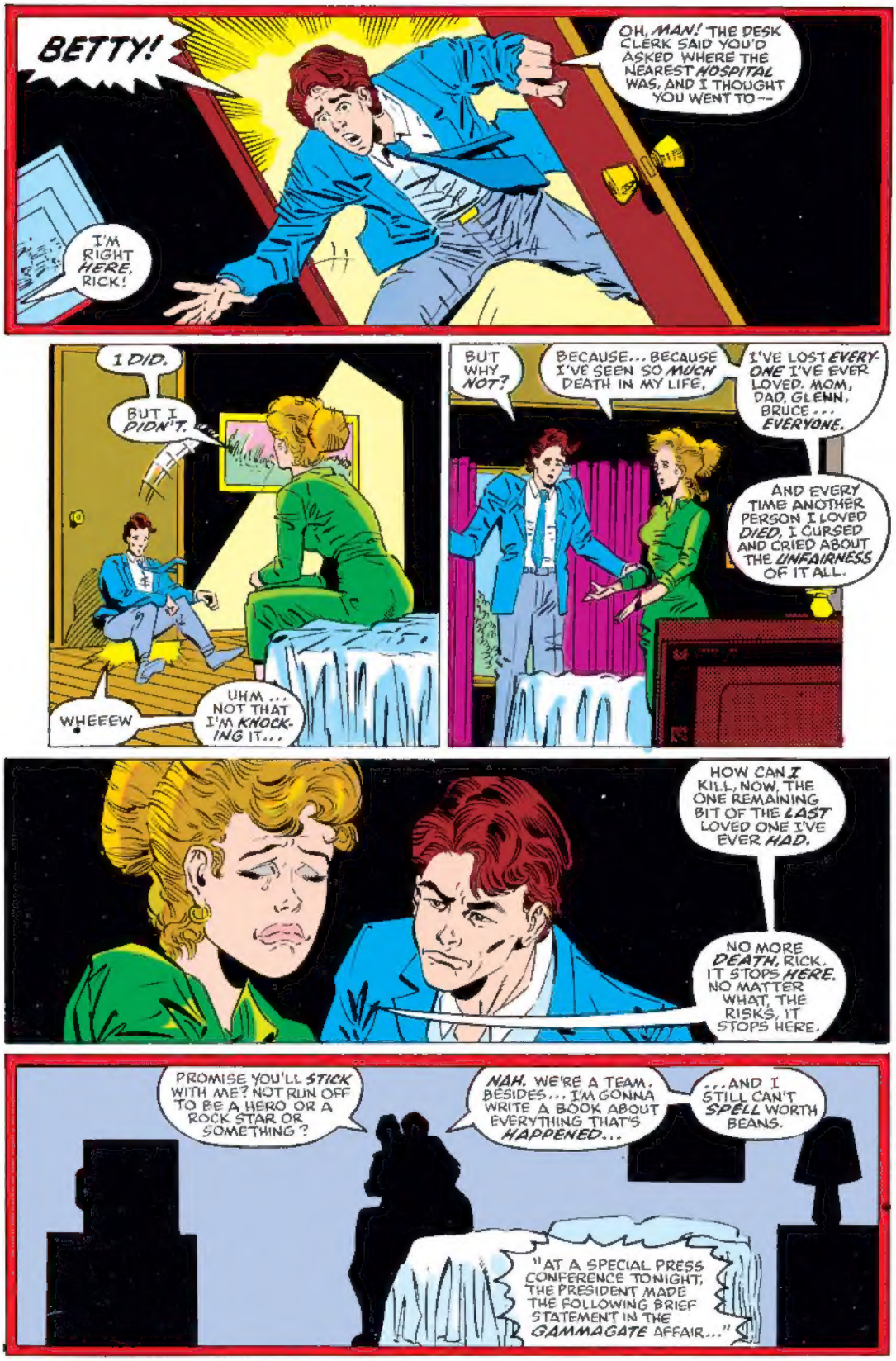
WORM-FOOD.

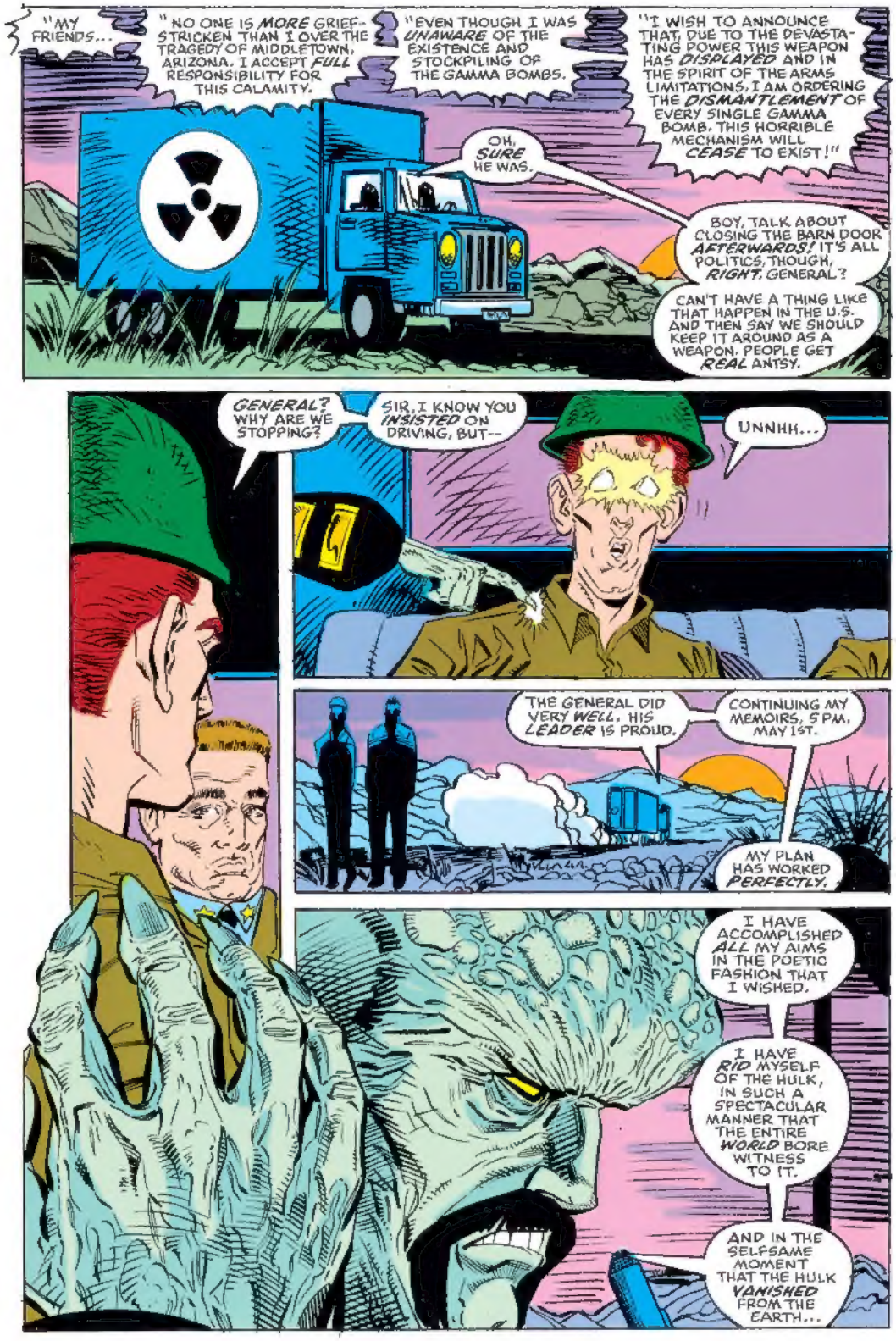
HERE LIES RICK JONES

TEENAGE IDIOT


SURE HE SAVED MY LIFE BUT THAT WASN'T THE END OF IT I LEARNED EVERYTHING FROM BRUCE THAT I NEVER LEARNED IN THE ORPHANAGES: SACRIFICE. LOVE DEVOTION. RESPONSIBILITY.
PEOPLE USED TO SAY BRUCE WAS A WIMP.
BUT IF BRUCE WAS A WIMP, SO WERE ALL THE AVENGERS, AND CAPTAIN MARVEL. BRUCE HAD AS MUCH PURE GUTS AS ANY OF THEM AND HE CHALLENGED ME... TO THINK TO GROW, TO BE THE BEST THAT I COULD BE, LIKE THEY SAY IN THE COMMERCIALS.
HE WAS THE BEST FRIEND I EVER HAD, AND I LOVED THE GUY.
AND NOW HE'S GONE, AND THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO HIM.
AND THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO THAT.
MRS. BANNER...
WE'RE READY FOR YOU.
NO, THANK YOU
I'VE CHANGED MY MIND


YOU KNOW BRUCE BANNER, AND THE HULK, BETTER THAN ANYONE. YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE CAPABLE OF.
DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE THEY'RE DEAD?
YEAH. I DO.
"Y'SEE, I WAS THERE. I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO GET TO GROUND ZERO... THE REMAINS OF THE TEXTILE FACTORY.
"WE DIDN'T FIND ANY TRACES OF THE LEADER, OR SAUNDERS AND LAROQUETTE WHO WE THINK WAS WORKING WITH HIM...
"BUT WE DID FIND... THE HULK...
"OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIM.
"IT WASN'T EVEN A BODY. MORE LIKE HE'D JUST TURNED TO POWDER.
"LYING THERE LIKE PETER PAN'S SHADOW WAITING TO BE PICKED UP.
"BUT ONLY THE WIND PICKED HIM UP, AND BLEW HIM AWAY INTO THE ARIZONA SKIES.
"AND, I HOPE, MAYBE TO A BETTER PLACE.
"RIO, MAYBE."
"MR. JONES!"
"WELL I DIDN'T WANT TO SOUND TOO MAUDLIN."


BETTY!
I'M RIGHT HERE, RICK!
OH, MAN! THE DESK CLERK SAID YOU'D ASKED WHERE THE NEAREST HOSPITAL WAS, AND I THOUGHT YOU WENT TO--
I DID.
BUT I DIDN'T.
WHEEEW
UHM... NOT THAT I'M KNOCKING IT...
BUT WHY NOT?
BECAUSE... BECAUSE I'VE SEEN SO MUCH DEATH IN MY LIFE.
I'VE LOST EVERYONE I'VE EVER LOVED. MOM, DAD, GLENN, BRUCE... EVERYONE.
AND EVERY TIME ANOTHER PERSON I LOVED DIED, I CURSED AND CRIED ABOUT THE UNFAIRNESS OF IT ALL.
HOW CAN I KILL, NOW, THE ONE REMAINING BIT OF THE LAST LOVED ONE I'VE EVER HAD.
NO MORE DEATH, RICK. IT STOPS HERE. NO MATTER WHAT, THE RISKS, IT STOPS HERE.
PROMISE YOU'LL STICK WITH ME? NOT RUN OFF TO BE A HERO OR A ROCK STAR OR SOMETHING?
NAH. WE'RE A TEAM. BESIDES... I'M GONNA WRITE A BOOK ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED...
...AND I STILL CAN'T SPELL WORTH BEANS.
"AT A SPECIAL PRESS CONFERENCE TONIGHT, THE PRESIDENT MADE THE FOLLOWING BRIEF STATEMENT IN THE GAMMAGATE AFFAIR..."


"MY FRIENDS...
"NO ONE IS MORE GRIEF-STRICKEN THAN I OVER THE TRAGEDY OF MIDDLETOWN, ARIZONA. I ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS CALAMITY.
"EVEN THOUGH I WAS UNAWARE OF THE EXISTENCE AND STOCKPILING OF THE GAMMA BOMBS.
"I WISH TO ANNOUNCE THAT, DUE TO THE DEVASTATING POWER THIS WEAPON HAS DISPLAYED AND IN THE SPIRIT OF THE ARMS LIMITATIONS, I AM ORDERING THE DISMANTLEMENT OF EVERY SINGLE GAMMA BOMB. THIS HORRIBLE MECHANISM WILL CEASE TO EXIST!"
OH, SURE HE WAS.
BOY, TALK ABOUT CLOSING THE BARN DOOR AFTERWARDS! IT'S ALL POLITICS, THOUGH, RIGHT, GENERAL?
CAN'T HAVE A THING LIKE THAT HAPPEN IN THE U.S. AND THEN SAY WE SHOULD KEEP IT AROUND AS A WEAPON. PEOPLE GET REAL ANTSY.
GENERAL? WHY ARE WE STOPPING?
SIR, I KNOW YOU INSISTED ON DRIVING, BUT--
UNNHH...
THE GENERAL DID VERY WELL, HIS LEADER IS PROUD.
CONTINUING MY MEMOIRS, 5 PM, MAY 1ST.
MY PLAN HAS WORKED PERFECTLY.
I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED ALL MY AIMS IN THE POETIC FASHION THAT I WISHED.
I HAVE RID MYSELF OF THE HULK, IN SUCH A SPECTACULAR MANNER THAT THE ENTIRE WORLD BORE WITNESS TO IT.
AND IN THE SELFSAME MOMENT THAT THE HULK VANISHED FROM THE EARTH...

MY NEW ORDER OF BEINGS WAS CREATED.
THEY SIT NOW IN THE BACK OF THIS TRUCK CONFUSED AND UNCERTAIN.
TWO TEENAGERS, A LAWYER, AN ENCYCLOPEDIA SALESMAN, AND A PRIEST... NOT THAT THEIR PREVIOUS LIVES HAVE ANY GREAT MEANING ANYMORE.
ALL I NEED NOW IS TIME.
THEY THINK THEY WILL DIE. BUT THEY WILL NOT.
ALTHOUGH THEY MAY WISH THEY HAD.
MY NEW RACE IS BORN. MY GREATEST ENEMY IS GONE. MY POWER BASE GROWS EVERY DAY.
THE END